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DISASTER ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE THROUGH ASCS

Disaster assistance to meet the emergency needs of agriculture is available through the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. Disasters calling for such action may be caused by floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, drought, windstorms and accompanying soil erosion, forest fires, widespread insect infestations, or unfavorable economic conditions as a result of natural catastrophes.

The measures used can be applied to any designated area in the United States to offset or prevent losses or damage when natural disasters (economic in some instances) strike farmers or ranchers, livestock, farm or range lands, water supplies or wildlife.

The assistance is provided through: (1) donation or sale of Commodity Credit Corporation-owned feed grains; (2) grazing and haying privileges under various supply-adjustment programs; (3) emergency conservation measures under the Agricultural Conservation Program; and (4) emergency wildlife feeding assistance.

DONATION OF CCC-OWNED FEED GRAIN provides relief for livestock when, as a result of a disaster, the President, as authorized by Public Law 81-875, declares a stricken area a "major disaster" area, and the Secretary of Agriculture determines that emergency feeding is needed. In "major disaster" areas feed can be donated (1) for a limited period for livestock commingled and unidentified as an immediate result of the disaster, or (2) for an extended period for livestock owned by individual farmers who have suffered severe property losses as a result of disaster and cannot afford to buy feed.

SALE OF CCC-OWNED FEED GRAIN provides assistance for livestock owners in areas certified by the governor of a State in which emergency areas have been designated by the Secretary of Agriculture because of feed shortages caused by the lasting effects of a natural disaster, such as drought, flood, hurricanes or similar catastrophe.

Use of this assistance measure does not require declaration of a "major disaster" area by the President, although it can be applied in such areas as well as in any areas designated by the Secretary.

Made available through P. L. 87-127 and P. L. 86-299, this means of assistance provides for the sale of CCC-owned feed grain to eligible farmers and ranchers for foundation herds of cattle, including producing dairy cattle, sheep and goats, at 75 percent of the feed grain support price, and for other eligible livestock at 100 percent of the support price.

Livestock owners eligible for such assistance cannot buy CCC-owned feed grains unless their feed supplies are insufficient for their livestock and if they cannot obtain feed through normal channels of trade without undue financial hardship.

GRAZING AND HAYING on Conservation Reserve acres and on other diverted acres under supply-adjustment programs are permitted under three different laws as a means of alleviating hardship caused by severe floods, drought, and other disasters.

The Soil Bank Act originally provided that the Secretary of Agriculture could permit only grazing on lands held in the Conservation Reserve. Harvesting of hay from such lands, however, was made permissible by 1961 legislation, until June 29, 1962. Permission is granted for either grazing or haying only in areas certified by the governor of the State and with the concurrence of the State USDA Disaster Committee.

Similar procedure is used to permit grazing and haying of lands diverted from feed grain production under the Feed Grain Program, and the Wheat Stabilization Program in any States in which emergencies provide the need for such action.

EMERGENCY CONSERVATION MEASURES under the Agricultural Conservation Program are authorized by Public Law 85-58. This law authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to designate as a disaster area, without certification by the governor, any State or area in which the Secretary finds that emergency conservation measures are needed to control severe wind erosion on farmlands, or to rehabilitate farmlands damaged by wind erosion, floods, hurricanes or other natural disasters.

The law also provides for the allocation of emergency funds which are used to share with farmers and ranchers the cost of the emergency conservation measures needed to meet the new conservation problems caused by the disaster in a given area. The law requires, however, that the disaster conditions must be such as to create new conservation problems, which, if not treated, would: (1) impair or endanger the land; (2) materially affect the productive capacity of the land; (3) represent unusual damage which, except for wind erosion, is not the type likely to recur frequently in the same area; and (4) would be so costly to repair that Federal assistance is or will be required to return the land to productive agricultural use.

The emergency measures are in addition to the soil, water, woodland, and wildlife conserving practices carried out under the regular ACP program, including those performed on land diverted under supply-adjustment programs.

Emergency conservation practices used are recommended by the State ACP development group and must have the approval of the Deputy Administrator, Conservation, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. Typical

of emergency practices to combat or repair damage by wind erosion or sustained drought are emergency tillage operations, emergency cover to prevent wind erosion, construction of fireguards, and constructing or improving reservoirs, wells, springs, and seeps for livestock and irrigation water. In flood disaster areas, emergency conservation practices frequently include removal of debris, the leveling of sand or gravel deposits and deep plowing, reestablishment of water courses and the reseeding of grasses of permanent types on land subject to severe erosion, and the replacement of other previously functioning conservation installations destroyed or damaged by floods.

Funds allocated by the Secretary for these emergency cost-sharing measures, as well as regular ACP program funds, are administered in each State through the Agricultural Conservation Program by ASC State and county committees.

EMERGENCY WILDLIFE FEEDING ASSISTANCE provides a means of protecting farm crops from heavy concentrations of migratory waterfowl, and of protecting both migratory and resident wildlife in times of disaster. In both cases, grain acquired under price support programs by the Commodity Credit Corporation can be made available for such emergency uses. The laws under which these assistance measures operate are P. L. 84-654 and P. L. 87-152. (Use of CCC-owned grain for emergency feeding of wildlife in major disaster areas is also permissible under P. L. 875.)

When crop damage is threatened, or when either migratory waterfowl or resident game birds or other wildlife are threatened with starvation, according to either finding by the Secretary of the Interior, upon recommendation by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, CCC-owned grain can be requisitioned for emergency feeding.



In the case of resident wildlife, however, States are authorized, upon request of an official State conservation agency, and with a finding by the Secretary of the Interior, to requisition CCC-owned grain for emergency feeding.

#### Use of Disaster-Assistance Measures in 1961

Disaster assistance measures were widely used in 1961 to combat emergencies caused by natural disasters that called for immediate or sustained aid. Assistance was made available as a result of widespread floods, wind and rainstorms or hurricanes, and also because of intense prolonged drought and the accompanying threat to farmers and ranchers, their livestock and their lands.

Spring floods in Alabama, and floods following Hurricane Carla in Louisiana and Texas in September, represented two occasions when stricken areas were declared "major disaster" areas by the President and emergency assistance was provided by USDA under the Disaster Relief Feed Grain Program. About 350 carloads of grain owned by the Commodity Credit Corporation were donated for the feeding of livestock in 31 Alabama counties making up the major disaster area in that State. CCC-owned grain, amounting to about 139 carloads, was also sent through November 3, 1961 to five hurricane-stricken Louisiana parishes and 6 Texas counties declared major disaster areas by the President.

Sale of CCC-owned feed grain was provided by action of the Secretary of Agriculture in 178 counties of 12 States through November 3, 1961 to offset the more lasting effects of natural disasters, mainly drought. CCC-owned feed grains purchased by farmers and ranchers under this program amounted to about 357,000 bushels of corn, 3,000,000 bushels of barley, 658,000 bushels of oats, and 165,000 hundredweight of grain sorghum from July 1 through November 3, 1961.

Because of flood and drought, grazing or haying was permitted on lands retired under the 1961 Feed Grain Program in 191 counties of 7 States and on lands in the Conservation Reserve (under the Soil Bank Program) in 246 counties of 12 States through November 3, 1961.

ACP emergency conservation cost-sharing assistance for farmers in 6 States and Puerto Rico (46 counties and 1 district) was offered for prevention and restoration measures to correct flood damage to farmlands, and in 164 counties of 9 States to prevent serious wind erosion and to correct damage to farmlands (water supplies for irrigation and livestock operations) caused by prolonged drought. Total allocations of emergency funds made to assist farmers and ranchers in carrying out these emergency conservation measures amounted to more than \$11 million.

Emergency wildlife feeding assistance, as a means of crop protection in cases of migratory waterfowl concentrations, was put in use on five occasions by the Secretary of the Interior in 1961, and on four occasions at the request of States in which CCC-owned grain was needed for the feeding and protection of resident wildlife. Further, CCC-owned grain was sent to major disaster areas in Alabama in the spring of 1961 to provide feed for wildlife.

DECLARATION OF A "MAJOR DISASTER" AREA by the President alerts all Federal agencies, as they are needed, to provide assistance in every way possible to meet acute distress situations caused by floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, disastrous drought, or other natural catastrophes.

A "major disaster" area may be declared by the President in any State or area of the United States if the governor of the State involved certifies that disaster assistance is needed.



The President is authorized under Public Law 875, 81st Congress, to set these broad actions in motion by his declaration. This law is intended to deal primarily with acute distress situations resulting from natural disasters requiring Federal assistance in addition to State and local efforts and resources.

In addition to the previously described feed donation services made available by ASCS for "major disaster" areas, other USDA agencies also have definite functions under such circumstances.

The Agricultural Marketing Service supplies food from Government-owned stocks, administrative means to distribute the food, and also provides trained veterinarians, food inspectors and graders. Personnel trained in physical, biological, chemical and engineering sciences are made available through the Agricultural Research Service.

Loans to farmers in disaster areas are provided by the Farmers Home Administration.

The Federal Extension Service renders advice on the cleanup of damaged property, sanitary measures, water supply and sewage disposal, insect infestations, disaster-caused power failures, feed and water for livestock and many other problems of safety and welfare that accompany a major disaster.

The Rural Electrification Administration makes available aid to restore electric power and telephone services, and may assist in other power service restoration, and provide credit and technical assistance when necessary.

The Soil Conservation Service provides technical assistance in the rehabilitation of disaster-damaged agricultural lands, emergency protection against high water, loan of heavy earth-moving equipment, and assistance in transportation problems when major highways cannot be used.

The Forest Service assists the States (State Forestry Agency) in forest fire and forest pest control, providing trained overhead suppression forces, equipment, material and supplies as may be required to meet the emergency. This agency also carries out such operations directly on national forest lands.

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